



Fighting for Firefighters & EMS Personnel

As the son of a former Philadelphia police officer, I know how dedicated America's first responders are to keeping our towns and cities safe. Their courage and sacrifice is undeniable, and we owe them a debt of gratitude. As a member of Congress, I pledge that I will always fight for our first responders, because true homeland security means supporting those who keep us safe. Below are some of the actions that I am taking in Congress to fight for our first responders.

✓ **Fighting for Tax Breaks for First Responders**

Co-sponsored H.R. 943, the Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act

- To help recruit and retain volunteer emergency responders, several states have passed laws allowing towns to provide property tax rebates to residents who volunteer as emergency responders. However, the IRS has ruled that such incentives are considered income and therefore subject to federal taxation. This bill would change federal tax law to make it clear that these tax rebates cannot be taxed as income. Elements of this bill were included in the *Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Relief Act*, which became law in late 2007.
- The bill is supported by the International Association of Fire Chiefs, National Volunteer Fire Council, and the Congressional Fire Services Institute.

✓ **Ensuring that Our Firefighters Have the Resources They Need**

Voted for Hundreds of Millions of Dollars for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program

- Congressman Murphy voted for the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*, which provided an additional \$210 million for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program, enabling firehouse reconstruction and renovation.
- The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program provides funding for local firefighters to obtain critically important equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training, and other resources necessary to protect the public and emergency personnel.
- In 2007 alone, the program provided \$432,000 to America Hose, Hook, and Ladder Company #2 in Bristol to purchase a new fire engine, nearly \$41,000 to Warrington Community Ambulance Corps for personal protective equipment, and over \$20,000 to Lower Southampton Fire Dept. #1 for personal protective equipment.

Voted for Hundreds of Millions of Dollars for the SAFER Grants Program

- The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Firefighters program provides much-needed funding for career and volunteer fire departments to hire new firefighters and recruit and retain volunteer firefighters.
- Congressman Murphy voted for a bill that provides \$420 million for the SAFER program for 2010, doubling 2009 funding.
- In 2008, the Bristol Fire Company received \$225,000 through this program. In 2009, Northampton and Bensalem Townships each received \$433,000 in SAFER funding, while Haycock Fire Company also received \$225,000.

Working Proactively to Protect our First Responders

- Congressman Murphy co-sponsored HR 4104, the *Emergency Responders Highway Safety Act of 2009*. This legislation will establish and carry out a highway emergency responders safety grant program for non-profit organizations so they can increase awareness of state laws that require a motorist to change lanes or reduce speed if passing a highway emergency responder.

✓ Ensuring that EMS Personnel Voices Get Heard

Established EMS Advisory Group

- After repeated calls from various Ambulance Units urging him to look into issues relating to their continued operations in the 8th District, Congressman Murphy convened an EMS Advisory Group to help sort through EMS issues. Members of the committee included representatives from ambulance units throughout the Bucks County, along with various municipal government representatives.

✓ Fighting for Full Benefits for First Responders

Proud Co-Sponsor of H.R. 235, the Social Security Fairness Act

- Congressman Murphy believes that first responders who have dedicated themselves to public service should not lose the retirement benefits that they or their spouses have earned throughout their careers.
- This bill would repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), two loopholes that often reduce Social Security benefits for first-responders and their families.

Proud Co-Sponsor of H.R 948, the Federal Firefighters Fairness Act

- This bill creates the presumption that federal firefighters who become disabled by heart disease, lung disease, certain cancers, and other infectious diseases contracted the illness on the job. Federal firefighters are currently denied this right that a majority of municipal firefighters already enjoy.

✓ Honoring our Fallen First Responders and Providing for Their Families

Introduced H.R. 959, the Officer Daniel Faulkner Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship Act

- This legislation would offer financial assistance for higher education to the children of police officers, firefighters, and other first responders who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. Under this bill, a child of one of these fallen heroes would become automatically eligible for the maximum level Pell Grant available.
- This legislation was inspired by the heroic service of Philadelphia Police Officer Daniel Faulkner. On December 8, 1981, Danny's life was tragically cut short when he was murdered during a routine traffic stop. He was shot and killed just a few weeks before his 26th birthday.
- This bill has been endorsed by numerous organizations, including the Fraternal Order of Police, the International Union of Police Associations, and the Police Chiefs Association of Bucks County.

Contact Congressman Murphy:

Bristol Office
414 Mill Street
Bristol, PA 19007
(215) 826-1963

Washington Office
1609 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-4276

Doylestown Office
72 North Main Street
Doylestown, PA 18901
(215) 348-1194

<http://www.patrickmurphy.house.gov>